



**United States Environmental  
Protection Agency  
Region 5**

October 29, 1996

**MEMORANDUM:**

**SUBJECT:** Request for Assistance Re: East Chicago Lead Levels

**FROM:** Michael J. Mikulka  
Waste, Pesticides and Toxics Division

**TO:** Tom Geishecker  
Superfund Division

As part of interim remedy selection at the USS Lead site in East Chicago, it came to our attention that the Indiana State Department of Health under a cooperative agreement with the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, had completed a Preliminary Public Health Assessment related to the site in 1994. Conclusions and recommendations were made, and a public health action plan was developed.

As part of the RCRA corrective action order under section 3008(h) of RCRA, USS Lead held a public meeting with local citizenry to get input on what residential areas should be sampled for lead to determine if corrective action was needed. The public and IDEM have expressed some concern that no further action was taken related to soil sampling results taken in 1985, some in residential areas, which showed very high lead levels. USS Lead has subsequently indicated verbally to us that it may not be responsible for some of the lead, claiming other historical sources. As you may know, USS Lead has no funds, with all remedial work being financed by a wholly owned subsidiary of Mueller Industries, which was specifically created for said purpose.

The RCRA corrective action order under Section 3008(h) of RCRA requires USS Lead to provide, as part of a RCRA Facility Investigation Work plan, a summary of the historical industrial background of the area in the vicinity of the facility. The historical description would include industries that potentially could have contributed metal contamination in the vicinity of the facility. Therefore, A RCRA program evaluation of other historical sources is pending upon USS Lead's submittal. USS Lead has indicated via correspondence that it would like to submit the RFI Work plan ahead of schedule. Although a time frame has not been specified, we anticipate submittal of a Work plan this fiscal year.

A copy of both reports referenced above are attached for your



consideration, and in your capacity as co-chair of the NW IN land and ground water remediation committee. I am asking that you consider the possibility of a removal or remedial action for residential areas in East Chicago which are shown by confirmatory sampling to be conducted bu USS Lead to pose a risk to human health where USS Lead disputes that it is the source.

I would also note that there is a big meeting with health departments in the near future to talk about partnerships with them in order to better protect the public health. This seems to be a good candidate for that.

If you have any questions on this matter, please call me at 6-6760. As you may recall, Fred Micke was assigned to this matter in the past for the OSF.

cc: Fred Micke, OSF  
Lorraine Kosik  
Sally Swanson  
Mirtha Capiro  
Paul Little